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ABSTRACT

The competency-based curriculum developed by the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) at the University of Massachusetts at Boston is discussed in this paper. The primary purpose of the college is to develop a curriculum preparing students to secure professional jobs in public and community service (as opposed to going to graduate school) and to develop a curriculum based on skill competencies rather than content knowledge. The specific objectives are: provide the widest possible set of educational opportunities to the largest possible clientele; award degrees only when they signify the acquisition of a specified set of skills and/or content knowledge; certify the acquisition of skills and knowledge without regard to the method or length of time needed to acquire them; emphasize the acquisition of intellectual skills instead of content knowledge; insure that a student has values that he can evaluate and apply; and develop personal and interpersonal relations skills in students. Reflecting these objectives, the CPCS curriculum is divided into three major parts--career certificates, general education certificates, and essential skills--in which students must meet requirements. Examples of some certificates are included. (ND)

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Teaching and Evaluating Competence for Public and Community Service

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Teaching and Evaluating Competence for Public and Community Service

John H. Strange

In presenting this paper, I have two objectives which I hope to accomplish. First, I am seeking assistance from you in performing my job as Dean of the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. I want your ideas, your criticisms, your reactions to our efforts to identify the educational objectives of an undergraduate liberal arts college seeking to prepare students to engage in public and community service as a career. Contained in this paper is a summary of our curriculum, prepared over the last three years and stated in competency terms. You are asked to react to the curriculum and to suggest changes that seem most appropriate. I offer no consultant fees for this service since an examination of my budget could lead one to believe that the state of Massachusetts is insolvent, but I do think that many of you will find the task intellectually stimulating and enjoyable for that reason alone. Your comments, suggestions, and ideas should be sent to me John H. Strange, Dean College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Boston, Mass. 02125.

My second objective is less self serving, at least in a direct way. I hope that the educational ideas and curricula set forth in this paper may affect your performance as a teacher and your activities as a member of the political science and higher education professions. As I will argue later, I believe we

political scientists are too often concerned with teaching the content we know and that we neglect other, more important objectives of the teaching profession. Perhaps an examination of the educational objectives of CPCS will lead you to examine your educational objectives and to make explicit choices about the actions you take as a teacher. The impact could be enormous on the institution of higher education, the profession of political science, us as individuals, and our students. Although I do not advocate change for change sake, I am confident that the explicit identification and attainment of educational objectives such as those we are attempting to specify would be salutary. Unlike my first objective, I am unlikely to know the extent to which this second objective has been attained.

The College of Public and Community Service was begun in July 1972 when I was hired to direct a team of seven in planning a third undergraduate college at U. Mass/ Boston. The mandate given me was broad and vague. In general CPCS was to accomplish what any individual commentator wanted the University of Massachusetts at Boston to accomplish, but which was not then being accomplished (educate older students, enrich a traditional liberal arts program with professional studies, admit older and more urban students, provide short term policy assistance and training to state government - where practically no graduates of the state University served in the legislature, challenge traditional hiring concepts and practices including tenure, etc.). There were two explicit mandates however: develop a curriculum preparing students to secure jobs in a profession (as opposed to going to graduate school), and develop a competency based curriculum. The

professional education objective stemmed from University administrators who were uneasy with the Boston faculty's avoidance of professional education and attachment to the most traditional forms of liberal arts education. The second objective, competency based education, stemmed from a faculty study which saw in competency based education a method to expand opportunities for attracting the brightest students in the liberal arts to U. Mass./ Boston.[1]

These two objectives, although considerably modified, remain the primary objectives of the College. A third objective of importance has been added as a result of the planning efforts of the planning committee, the values and interests of new faculty, and budget and other political constraints: a concentration of effort in educating adults with considerable real life experiences but widely varying formal educational attainments. Considerable debate exists within the College over the relative importance of the College's objectives (should all not be attainable in full), and arount the question of the compatibility of specific objectives. Furthermore, competency based education is being pursued for reasons additional to those of the pre-1972 efforts. It is now argued competency based education is useful in challenging the traditional activities and procedures of higher education, and that it is the most appropriate vehicle by which students of equal ability but differing life experiences can be educated and/or have their education certified and legitimated.

Before setting forth a portion of the specific competencies

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1. The political events surrounding the establishment of the College, and the political turmoil that has been the context for the operation of the College since are, of course, much more complex.

which comprise the current CPCS curriculum, let me make clear some of my ideas about higher education for they are important to an understanding of what CPCS is attempting to accomplish.

1. The major objective of higher education should be to provide the widest possible set of educational opportunities to the largest possible clientele. If this objective were to be attained, colleges and universities would be teaching, or directing individuals to more appropriate learning opportunities, every conceivable subject and skill. Clients would come and go at will, learning when and what they wanted through methods most appropriate to their needs. Degrees, as we know them today, would not exist.

2. Colleges and universities should award degrees only when the award of a degree signifies the acquisition of a specified set of skills and/or content knowledge. This would mean the elimination of general degrees which tend today to be more indicative of the time spent in an educational institution than the skills or knowledge acquired therein. It would also end the allocation of jobs, higher salaries, and other economic rewards on the basis of a degree which does not reflect either superior ability or superior knowledge. There is little evidence to indicate that BA, MA, or even PhD degrees accurately identify those individuals prepared to perform specific jobs or that they effectively differentiate between those who can and can not perform effectively in an occupation.

3. To the extent that colleges and universities certify, through the awarding of degrees or otherwise, that certain skills and knowledge has been acquired by an individual, they should be required to certify the presence of those skills and knowledge

without regard to the method or length of time needed to acquire them. Individuals do not learn only in educational institutions, in classrooms, as a result of lectures, seminars, discussions, writing papers, conducting laboratory experiments. Content knowledge is acquired and intellectual skills are developed in many other settings, and as a result of many other activities. Therefore, as long as society accords to the university the right and obligation to certify that learning has been accomplished, it is incumbent on the university to develop a method for determining whether that learning has occurred and, when it has taken place, to so indicate without regard to the source of that learning or the length of time an individual has been associated with the institution. Competency based education is an appropriate vehicle for accomplishing this objective. Many are the difficulties, however. First, educational objectives must be stated with at least enough precision so as to get consistent judgements or decisions regarding the attainment of those objectives. Second, methods for collecting and evaluating evidence necessary for those judgements or decisions must be developed. Third, the political dislocations stemming from such a radical change in the objectives of colleges and universities must be resolved. Faculty will have to learn to live with evaluations of teaching based on competencies acquired by students; other institutions and learning opportunities may provide much of the instruction required and thereby reduce demand for degree oriented education; faculty work roles will change with a emphasis on skill development, advising and evaluation; universities will not be guaranteed four years of tuition before the degree is attained. Fourth, where educational objectives are not met, new,

efficient and effective teaching methods must be developed.

4. The specific objectives associated with general college degrees (such as the current BA degree) should emphasize the acquisition of intellectual skills as opposed to content knowledge. Content should primarily serve as a vehicle for the teaching of intellectual skills. As such, we should expect our curricula offerings to be quite varied in content, unless some specific content area (biology or mathematics possibly) can be demonstrated to be a more effective medium for the teaching of intellectual skills desired.

I do not intend to argue that content is unimportant. It is just that a general degree (if we are to have them) should reflect the mastery of the intellectual skills rather than content since content knowledge is quickly lost unless regularly used, being forgotten at almost the same rate it is acquired. In preparing individuals for specific occupations, specific content objectives may be legitimately established if it can be shown that content knowledge is a prerequisite for successful performance in the occupation. We often establish content requirements without such evidence. Moreover, the specific content knowledge required in most occupations is constantly changing.

There may be some content which all persons should acquire in order to engage in effective communication with other members of society. Certainly a general vocabulary would be such a requirement. Perhaps a knowledge of current events or, in the United States, American history are other such areas.

The substitution of intellectual skill objectives for content objectives will be a most difficult one to achieve, however. Certainly we at CPCS have fallen far short of this objective. This

difficulty is highlighted in Jonathan Warren's paper prepared for this panel (What Political Scientists Expect of their Students). Warren notes that content was only one of four major categories used by faculty in California to describe their most capable students, the others being intellectual skills, active desire for knowledge, and personal motivation. (The last two categories seem very similar to me.) His data also show that it is content knowledge which faculty most often reported as an expectation of these students. There are many explanations as to why content dominates over intellectual skills as educational objectives. Most faculty members are most often competent in content knowledge, but relatively untrained in the teaching of intellectual skills. College faculty are usually much happier to have students who already have highly developed intellectual skills and who have the capacity and desire to improve these skills with minimum input from the faculty member. Furthermore, in times of decreasing budgets especially, content is an effective device to protect ones own position in the educational system. Content requirements guarantee enrollments, hence jobs. Moreover, it is the professional group deliniated by content (the American Political Science Association for example) which provides the legitimacy for tenure, promotions, publications and other scholarly activities. Content is, in addition, a predominate objective of education because it is relatively easy to determine when it has been acquired (at least if we examine immediately after the completion of the learning process.) Finally, many students find content much easier to learn than intellectual skills.

As you could expect, and as you can see from an examination of the CPCS competencies, my arguments against content as the primary

educational objective have not been met (or agreed to) by the CPCS faculty. And I personally have an escape since the content of political science can often be reasonably associated with training for public and community service careers. Still it is important to focus on the intellectual skills which we seek to develop.

5. It is not enough to specify the intellectual skills that should be achieved in an undergraduate education and the content required to undertake specific employment opportunities. It is also appropriate to seek, as a primary objective of education, opportunities to insure that a student has values, and that he be able to compare and evaluate his own values as against other values (which presumes a knowledge of other values), and apply those values in real life situations, modifying them when appropriate or desired. This implies an ability to make one's values explicit. A student might also be required to give evidence that he understands the source of his values.

6. Another appropriate objective of education is to develop personal and inter-personal skills. Which skills should be required presents a difficult problem, similar to that of what content mastery should be required of students. Jonathan Warren's data identify such factors as curiosity, motivation, and aggressive pursuit of an idea, determination as descriptive characteristics of particularly capable students. Other requirements, especially for those preparing to enter public and community service, might include the ability to interact effectively with people of all religions, races, classes, sexes, and ages. Another set of interpersonal skills might include the ability to communicate clearly, listen carefully, to interview successfully. The ability to make decisions, or to make them in a limited time

or less than complete information could also be included in this set of competencies. Still other competencies might be to read and write effectively under especially difficult time pressures (at least for those entering public service) or the ability to deal effectively with major events in life: success, failure, retirement, death. These objectives are infrequently found as explicit objectives of undergraduate education. This is to be expected since the identification of an appropriate, but limited number of objectives are difficult; we are relatively unskilled in teaching these competencies, and some are not subject to evaluation of competence within the normal time frame for undergraduate education even should methods for evaluation of these competencies be successfully devised.

The CPCS Curriculum

The curriculum of CPCS reflects the effort to achieve some of the objectives identified above. The examples which follow are representative samples of the competencies which we have developed and provide evidence of a widely varying achievement of the educational goals noted above. It is a competency based program leading to the BA degree. The College examines and certifies knowledge and skills without regard to where or when they acquired. Credit or advancement toward a degree is not related in any way to the time spent in the institution. The degree is granted upon the demonstration of competence without regard to the time taken to acquire the competence. In reviewing portions of the curriculum reported here, or the entire curriculum of the College (available by mail for $3.00) you will note many of the shortcomings of our efforts. Let me summarize those of which we are most aware. First, we demand the acquisition of content knowledge but we do not

adequately justify the necessity of that specific content. Most content is argued as necessary as a result of armchair speculation rather than through an examination of real situations. Second, we fail to separately and adequately identify the intellectual skills that should be attained, repeating them throughout the curriculum. Third, we do not acknowledge that the improvement (over time) in skills should be an objective of education and have no techniques for evaluating this critical objective. All of our competencies relate to skills and knowledge at a single point in time. Fourth, our students tell us that our competency statements are not easily understood. Fifth, our evaluation methods are still quite rudimentary consisting primarily of written and oral evaluations with occassional field observation, panel review of actual job performances, and responses to simulated events. Nevertheless, I believe the ideas contained here may be useful and stimulating to you. Certainly your ideas, observations, critiques and suggestions will be useful to us.

The curriculum of the College is divided into three major parts: career certificates (certificates are sets of interrelated competencies), general education certificates, and essential skills. Students may write their own certificates or competencies which are subject to acceptance by the faculty. One career certificate (representing approximately 1/4 of the total requirement for graduation), five general center competencies including at least one from each of our three areas, and three essential skills competencies must be completed for graduation. We currently have three career centers- Housing, Legal Services Education and Human Growth and Development; three general centers (Culture, Institutions, and Individual and Society); and three separate, but required

competencies in Essential Skills- Speaking and Writing, Reading and Mathematics.

The clearest explicit statements of intellectual competencies demanded of the student pursuing our BA degree are found in our Essential Skills curriculum. These competencies refer specifically to reading and writing skills, however. The reading certificate is reproduced (omitting standards and criteria) below.[1]

Reading Certificate

1. You will be able to anticipate the usefulness of a book encountered for the first time by 'pre-reading' it. (Pre-reading is then defined.)

2. You will be able to locate and make use of a library appropriate to your own research purposes. (Focusing on locating resources, gathering data, and organizing the data)

3. You will be able to orient yourself to reading materials encountered for the first time. This means that after an initial reading you will be able to:
   a)identify the writer's attitude toward her/his material
   b)identify the writer's attitude toward her/his readers
   c)locate the writer's main ideas
   d)locate the main step through which the main idea is developed
   e)begin to locate the reading materials within a field of historical, political, ideolcgical or other appropriate references which establishes its context.

4. You will be able to recognize texts as integrated structures. This means that you will be able to:
   a)identify the several parts and factors that make up the whole
   b)determine the function of these in relation to the whole, that is, the way the parts complete the whole, and the way the parts make up the whole.

5. You will be able to judge the quality of a piece of non-fiction prose or literature using a set of specified criteria. (The criteria require that development of the main point, accuracy of information, and approach to the audience be evaluated.)

The writing and speaking certificate and the mathematics

1. All competencies developed at CPCS are written in a standard format including the competency, evaluation methods, criteria for evaluation. Only the competency statements are used in this paper. An example of the complete statement can be found in Appendix A.

certificate follow a similar pattern. These competencies seem to me to be examples of intellectual skill competencies appropriate to our curriculum. The remainder of our curriculum, however, uses content as the primary objective. Intellectual skills are implicitly and explicitly included in these competencies. But they are repeated, become dependent upon specific content for demonstration, and are not written in such a way as to require demonstrated ability over time.

One competency in the small group certificate of the Individual and Society center is: You shall differentiate between the small group and other groups. Although specific content is required, I would contend that the intellectual skill involved is a general one required in many of our content areas: You will be able to delimit (define), classify, and analyze phenomena, data, information. Should it matter whether the classification is of groups, multi-celled organisms, wars and revolutions or some other subject? We might want to expand upon this competency by requiring the ability to change the criterion of classification, reclassify the phenomena, and explain the changes resulting therefrom. The subject matter could be baseball hits and errors, cultures, or what constitutes a living person. It is the ability to delineate a subject matter, classify it and analyze it and then modify the classification noting the implications of that change which should be important to us. Instead we define our objectives in content terms and obscure what should be our primary educational objectives.

Another example can be found in our Culture certificate in this competency: The student will be able to identify and analyze the shared criteria for sanctioning leaders in two situations. As a result of participating in evaluations of this competency, I

have learned that the competency as administered really requires the student to define and analyze phenomena and to explain events in the terms and theories of social anthropologists. It is the content that dominates the competency. A similar competency in the Institutions Center calls for a student to "analyze an actual decision-making situation within the public sector." In the criteria section of the competency the real objective is clearly stated:"Based on your understanding of elitism, pluralism, and interest group theories, which of these intellectual models does your decision fit?" Perhaps it is a legitimate objective to require students to understand and apply variious approaches to the analysis of political power, especially if they are to enter public and community service. It seems more likely, however, that the intellectual skills required in the Culture and Institution examples shown above are the same, yet the content is the primary objective of the competency as written and administered. Would we not better serve the interests of our students (and simplify our curriculum) if we specified the intellectual skills required and allowed them to be exibited in a variety of content areas? This might provide us with the opportunity to specify different levels of ability in these intellectual skills to be attained over time. It might also provide a method for insuring that a student can and will apply skills in situations other than the situation in which the skill was learned.

One final example of the way content comes to dominate intellectual skills can be found in several competencies directed toward insuring that students will be able to design and implement a research project: Thus these competencies (among others)

Institutions: Can develop and interpret economic profiles of local communities

Institutions: Employ basic research and observation skills

in order to gather data and test an hypothesis about a neighborhood of your choice in the Boston SMSA.

Culture: The student will be able to determine the existence and effect of ethnocentrism in a social policy, either domestic or foreign.

What formulation of a competency requiring ability to engage in research activities could be formulated that would allow demonstration in a variety of content areas? What requirements are possible for the demonstration of advanced levels of ability in the area of research skills?

These are the complex and difficult questions we face when we try to make explicit our educational objectives. As I noted earlier, we at CPCS have not solved the problems in this undertaking. In fact I come to you seeking your help. Acknowledging the types of difficulties identified above, what suggestions would you make after reviewing our Institutions curriculum which is the area most related to the content areas covered by political science? Students must complete one certificate in Institutions(a combination of any four competencies in that certificate statement) and may complete up to three competencies as part of the BA degree requirement. Although not prepared for the same purposes, a comparson with the competency objectives for the teaching of political science set forth by Richard Giardina in his paper for this panel would be appropriate.

Institutions Certificates

Social Change Certificate

1. Employ basic research and observation skills in order to gather data and test an hypothesis about a neighborhood of your choice in the Boston SMSA.

2. Identify and describe the local governmental structure of a community. Discuss the relation of key actors in local government to other interests in relation to a

specific social change effort.

3-4. (A) Identify those groups with an interest or stake in a particular social or political conflict, the source and nature of each group's political power, and how that power is exercised in a particular situation. (B) From the perspective of one group involved in the conflict develop a strategy designed to further their interests, taking into account the relative strength of all parties and considering at least the following options: conventional political activity, use of the courts, negotiation, and confrontation.

5. Employ basic organizing skills in a field situation.

Political Economy Certificate

1. Can apply basic economic concepts to understand and interpret current events.

2. Can apply traditional economic theory to explain important social problems.

3. Can evaluate the effects of state or city revenues and expenditures on residents of various income levels.

4. Can trace the effects, over time, of a change in supply, demand or price of a good or service in the private sector on consumers and suppliers.

5. Can evaluate economic institutions outside or counter to traditional American economic institutions.

6. Can develop and interpret economic profiles of local communities.

Politics Certificate

1. Explain concepts in classical democratic theory by showing how they are illustrated in contemporary political issues or events.

2-3. You will be able to analyze an actual decision-making situation within the public sector.

4. Understand and be able to employ basic analytic and organizational skills in a municipal or other election.

5. Describe the major steps by which a particular bill becomes a law in Massachusetts.

Management Certificate

1. To demonstrate an understanding of how a decision gets made within an organization, including both formal and informal processes.

2. You will develop a set of four legal and administrative strategies designed to change at least one aspect of the operational behavior of a public bureaucracy.

3. You will identify a specific managerial problem in the public sector and recommend a feasible solution.

4. To design an operating program in either a public sector agency or community based organization.

5. To be able to develop and interpret budget documents in both private and public agencies.

6. You will demonstrate an ability to draft a proposal and to develop a grant development strategy.

Our competencies also make an effort to deal with the question of values. Several examples can be given:

1. Can analyze a significant individual choice in which values are in conflict.

2. Can define and analyze the extent and limits of an individual's responsibility in institutional and social settings.

3. Can describe the history of and interpret the values associated with a job in the past and today.

These competencies address directly the educational objectives that were discussed earlier. Certainly the first and second competencies listed above relate directly to one's ability to identify, explicate, evaluate and perhaps modify one's own values. The third requires the explication of values associated with other individuals and institutions.

The competencies in our curriculum relating to personal skills do not address motivation, aggressive pursuit of knowledge, or curiosity - at least not directly. We do require that students be able to communicate in oral and written form to lay and technical audiences both lay and technical material. The following competencies

are also examples of those in our curriculum requiring interpersonal skills:

1. The student will be aware of his/her own verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic communications and their impact on others. (Individual and Society)

2. Students will be able to speak to others and be correctly heard and to listen to another person and correctly hear what he/she is saying. (Individual and Society)

3. Identify from the following areas the aspects of a housing situation most important to the development of a sound tenant-management relationship. Then, using these areas as the basis, prepare and deliver an orientation session for tenants of a new housing development. The areas include:

   i. lease
   ii. maintenance sessions
   iii. social and community services
   iv. tenant participation
   (from Housing Management Career Competency)

4. Conduct and evaluate an initial client interview (from Law Career Competency)

5. Given: Some preliminary information about a client's problem.
   The relavent legal rules which apply to that problem.
   The identity of cooperative sources.
   Determine what information is needed, find the information by conducting field interviews and observations, and write up the report. (Law competencies)

A review of these competencies indicates we have a long way to go in identifying the interpersonal skills student should acquire. We can be specific about those related to specific work situations, but what about abjectives such as,"Students should be highly motivated to raise questions and search for answers in a variety of subject matters." General formulation of this type provide enormous difficulty in evaluating and may be impossible to teach. Any suggestions?

I have left to last the area of evaluting competence, primarily because we at CPCS have spent less time on this important question. In competency-based education there has been an extensive search for instruments of evaluation such as tests, simulation exercises, and other forms of evaluation that can be administered in groups, are inexpensive, and can be quickly scored. We have developed some of these instruments of our own, are working on others,

and have tried evaluation instruments prepared elsewhere. I am far from being satisfied with our efforts. Instead I am trying to formulate some guiding principles for the evaluation of competence. Here are my current ideas.

1. Evaluation will ultimately require that personal judgements be made. Consequently we at CPCS should include public and community service professionals as well as academicians among those making the judgements in order to include the values and orientations of the career area for which students are being prepared.

2. The more specific the criteria for evaluation, the easier and quicker evaluation will be. (We have moved froward in this area. All of our competencies have a criteria and standards statement.)

3. When content is evaluated, it is probably appropriate to test for the ability to acquire or reacquire content rapidly. Content not used is lost. But content once learned can be re-learned more quickly than content not perviously learned. The re-learning ability is what is most important to educators.

4. Evaluations of material prepared and actions taken on the job are preferable to requirements that a student speculate what he would do under given conditions. Simulations may provide a middle ground.

5. Evaluations should encompass a number of competencies at one time, and should take into account the inter-relationships among competencies, even their hierarchial structure if one exists.

6. Evaluations of intellectual skills should be repeated with some undetermined level of frequency and covering different content in order to assure transferability of skill and maintenance or improvement in skill level.

7. Some competencies cannot be evaluated in the shore run and should therefore be written as "A student shall be exposed to...". For example, we may desire that a student have an understanding of and appreciation for art that results in art being an influence in his life. This may be reflected in visits to museums or galleries, or attendance at concerts. We can test the "understanding of" but we cannot evaluate the long term influence on a person's habits and dispositions. Let us be candid about that, require exposure, and hope for the best.

I hope these ideas will stimulate your thoughts and provode a response. When not fighting the budget battle, reviewing faculty performance, filling out questionnaires, or doing the trivial tasks of a Dean, I will respond to your suggestions. Thanks for your help.

Appendix A

COMMUNITY CHANGE CERTIFICATE

COMPETENCY 2

SOCIAL WELFARE

Competency: Analyze and critique a governmental intervention strategy for social welfare by selecting one federal program* and discussing the following:

a. the historical origin and development of the program
b. the implicit and explicit values of the program and their relationship to dominant American values
c. the beneficiaries of the program
d. consequences of the program's operation and administration on other sectors of the social welfare system and the marketplace
e. who pays for the program
f. your view of the effectiveness of the program in meeting the social need or concern it was designed to address and any alternative approaches to meeting that need.

Criteria and Standards:

1. Discussion of Item a. should include identification of the social need or concern the program was intended to address, the political and social forces which shaped and influenced the legislation establishing the program, and any significant legislative changes since its original enactment.

2. Discussion of Item c. should include the stated beneficiaries, the acutal and direct beneficiaries, those who benefit indirectly, and the relative political power of these groups in society.

3. Discussion of Item d should include both positive and negative consequences.

4. Discussion of Item e. should include the relative impact of the cost of the program on varicus sectors of the population who pays for it.

5. All facts must be documented by reference to source material.

6. Discussion paper should reflect and refer to relevant readings and should include a bibliography.

Example of Evaluation: Select one federal social welfare program and write a discussion paper (2500 words), according to the specifications above.

* Examples of Federal Programs

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
Medicare
Medicaid
Social Security
CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act)

This competency is from the Institutions Center

"Tell me to whom shall I have to bow? Upon whom shall I have to fawn? To whom must I sell myself? Whom do you want me to leave dying, while I turn away my eyes?"

Antigone to King Creon when he offered her power if she would not oppose his will - Antigone, Sophocles 442B.C.

#4 VALUES: BUREAUCRACY AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Too often in recent years we have been haunted by the voice of the army officer or bureaucrat accused of a crime. "I am not responsible," he says. "I was doing what I was told." He may claim further that no one is responsible; the organization is just too big. We would guess that he is hiding his own guilt, but experience tells us also that lines of responsibility are ambiguous and complex in bureaucracies. Furthermore one's ambition is usually best served by obedience to one's superiors or to the "organization," and there are minimal rewards for speaking out. The person in an organization must learn to ask: what are my absolute values (racial justice, for example); to what extent does my organization share those values; what power do I have in the organization; and at what point have I compromised my values beyond what I consider morally responsible?

The question of moral responsibility within a bureaucracy may be the crucial moral question of our time. It is certainly a question for human service workers.

COMPETENCY: Can define and analyze the extent and limits of an individual's responsibility in institutional and social settings.

CRITERIA: Your analysis must include:

1. an explained statement of a value that you hold to be important - (racial or sexual equality, for example).
2. a description of a social or institutional setting which violates the value in some measure.
3. the way in which you define the limit of responsibility within the setting.
4. the actions one ought to take when one's values have been threatened with compromise.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: You may write an essay or present an oral account. You are encouraged to choose a case from your own experience in an organization.

CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS:

1. The essay must be at least 1500 words.
2. The violation of values within an institution must be documented by presenting policy statements, violations of written policy, testimony, historical precedent.

This competency is from the Culture Center.

Judging the Work may be demonstrated with either non-fiction prose writing or with a work of literature. Choose one.

A. Competency title: Judging the Work - Non-fiction Prose

Rationale: Throughout your career in public and community service, whatever your role, you will be judging written materials, both the work of others and your own, that state and advance a point of view. When you are preparing material that makes a case for a point of view and that seeks to influence others, or when reviewing such material being prepared by others, you must have a frame of reference (or set of criteria) with which to judge the piece of work. It is suggested that Judging the Work (either with non-fiction prose or literature) is the last competency to be demonstrated in the Reading Certificate.

Competency: The student can judge the quality of a piece of non-fiction prose writing using a set of specific criteria.

Criteria:

I) In judging the quality of the piece, you must address each of the following areas: a) development of the main point, b) accuracy of information, and C) approach to audience. Under each of the judgment headings listed below (a,b,c), you must choose at least one of the criteria listed as subpoints (1,2,3), or use a comparable criterion which you have substituted.

a) Your criteria for judging the development of the main point should address at least one of the following:
   1. How consistently the author maintains the point-of-view.
   2. How well the author uses evidence, supporting materials, etc., to strengthen the main point or to make it clear.
   3. How logical the author's argument is.

b) Your criteria for judging the accuracy of the information should address at least one of the following:
   1. How exact the author's statements of fact are.
   2. How careful the author's documentation is.
   3. How broad the range of sources of information used is.

c) Your criteria for judging the quality of the author's relationship to audience should address at least one of the following:
   1. How appropriate the author's choice of language is, given his/her subject and audience.
   2. How effectively techniques are used to help the audience grasp the subject.
   3. The extent to which the nature of identity of the audience has been taken into account.

II) The evidence of the written work must not contradict your judgments.

Evaluation: You will be provided with a range of materials from which to choose the one piece you are to judge. There are several examples in each of the following categories from which to choose: grant proposals, position papers, program reviews, proposed solution to problem and plan of action, and general science and humanities articles. Your judgment of the work may be presented in writing or orally.

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Competency # 3-4

ANALYSIS OF POWER: (double competency)

Rationale: Our primary concern in these competencies is the student's ability to accurately identify the actors and interest groups involved in political conflict, to understand what factors influence or determine their position in that conflict, to assess the political resources available to each actor or group and to develop strategy appropriate to the setting. Political conflicts are seldom resolved on the basis of a simple or straight forward calculation of right or wrong or even a calculation of what the majority wants; rather interest groups--determined by numerous factors (social class, age, geography, race, etc.)--contend in the decision making arena. Understanding what interests are involved in a conflict and how their power--expressed in numerous ways--will be exercised is an essential pre-condition to effective change oriented action on the part of community groups or public sector officials.

In sum these competencies respond to that need by (1) asking students to develop an accurate map of a specific conflict situation, and (2) based on that map design a strategy to further the interests of one (any) party to that conflict.

Competency: (A) To identify those groups with an interest or stake in a particular social or political conflict, the source and nature of each group's political power, and how that power is exercised in the particular situation. (B) From the perspective of one group involved in the conflict develop a strategy designed to further their interests, taking into account the relative strengths of all parties and considering at least the following options: conventional political activity, use of the courts, negotiation, and confrontation.

Criteria and Standards:

Part A: The student must: identify the key participants, describe their political values or ideology, identify their goals in the particular situation, describe the nature and extent of each group's political resources, and describe how those resources will be used in this situation.

Part (B): Given the data from Part (A) the student will develop a strategy for one of the contending interests. That strategy must take into account: the formal decision making process, the relationships between or among the contending parties, the relative strengths of each party, the possible use of strategies based on each option in the competency statement, and (if appropriate) the relationship of the strategy you propose to the long and short term goals of the group you choose.

In both parts of the competency accuracy and completeness are primary considerations.